

1.4 WORKING WITH VISUAL BASIC

In Visual Basic 6.0, you can work in three modes:

- (a) The Design Mode, where you design the interface for an application.
- (b) The Run Mode, where you can see the output after executing the application.
- (c) The Break Mode, the situation where execution of your project has stopped because of an error condition. You have to debug the program and execute it again.

All these three modes will be in this unit, despite the fact that the major part is on the design mode. The reason is to help you learn how to use the software to tackle your programming project and coursework rapidly and easily.

1.4.1 Visual Basic's Environment

Visual Basic provides a great deal of flexibility, allowing you to configure the working environment to best suit your individual style. You can choose between a single or multiple document interfaces, and you can adjust the size and positioning of the various Integrated Development Environment (IDE) elements. Your layout will persist between sessions of Visual Basic.

SDI or MDI Interface

Two different styles are available for the Visual Basic IDE: Single Document Interface (SDI) or Multiple Document Interface (MDI). With the SDI option, all of the IDE windows are free to be moved anywhere on screen; as long as Visual Basic is the current application, they will remain on top of any other applications. With the MDI option, all of the IDE windows are contained within a single resizable parent window.

To switch between SDI and MDI modes:

1. Select Options from the Tools menu.

The Options dialog box is displayed.

2. Select the Advanced tab.

3. Check or uncheck the SDI Development Environment check box.

The IDE will start in the selected mode the next time you start Visual Basic.

or

Run Visual Basic from the command line with a /SDI or /MDI parameter.

Docking Windows

Many of the windows in the IDE can be docked, or connected, to each other or to the edge of the screen. These include the Toolbox, Form Layout Window, Project Explorer, Properties window, Color Palette, and Immediate, Locals, and Watch windows.

With the MDI option, windows can be docked to any side of the parent window; with SDI they can only be docked beneath the menu bar. Docking capabilities can be toggled on or off for a given window by selecting the appropriate check box on the Docking tab of the Options dialog box, available from the Options command on the Tools menu.

To dock or undock a window:

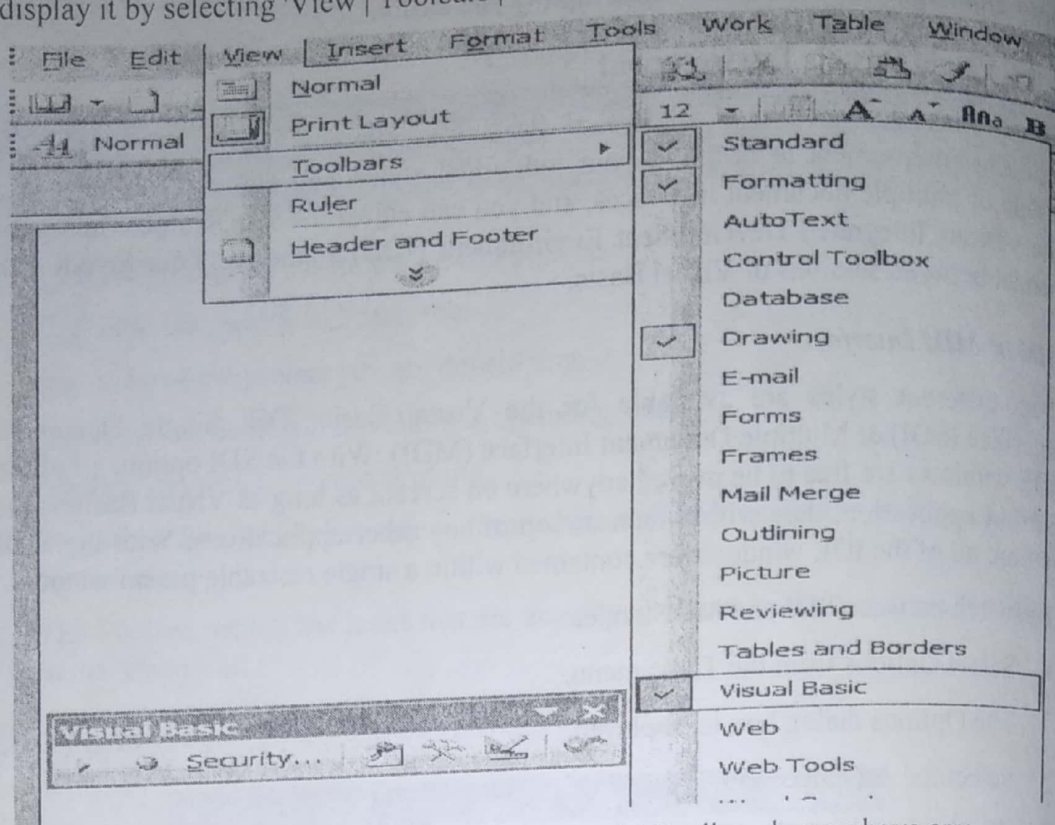
1. Select the window you wish to dock or undock.
2. Drag the window to the desired location by holding down the left mouse button.
3. The outline of the window will be displayed as you drag.

Release the mouse button.

1.4.2 VB Editor and Toolbar

The 'VB Editor' is accessed from the 'Visual Basic' Toolbar, and opens in a separate window. You would normally switch between the application window (WORD, EXCEL or ACCESS) and the VBE window using the Windows 'Task bar' or the 'Alt' + 'Tab' key combination.

If the 'Visual Basic' toolbar is not visible in your application, you might need to display it by selecting 'View | Toolbars | Visual Basic'.



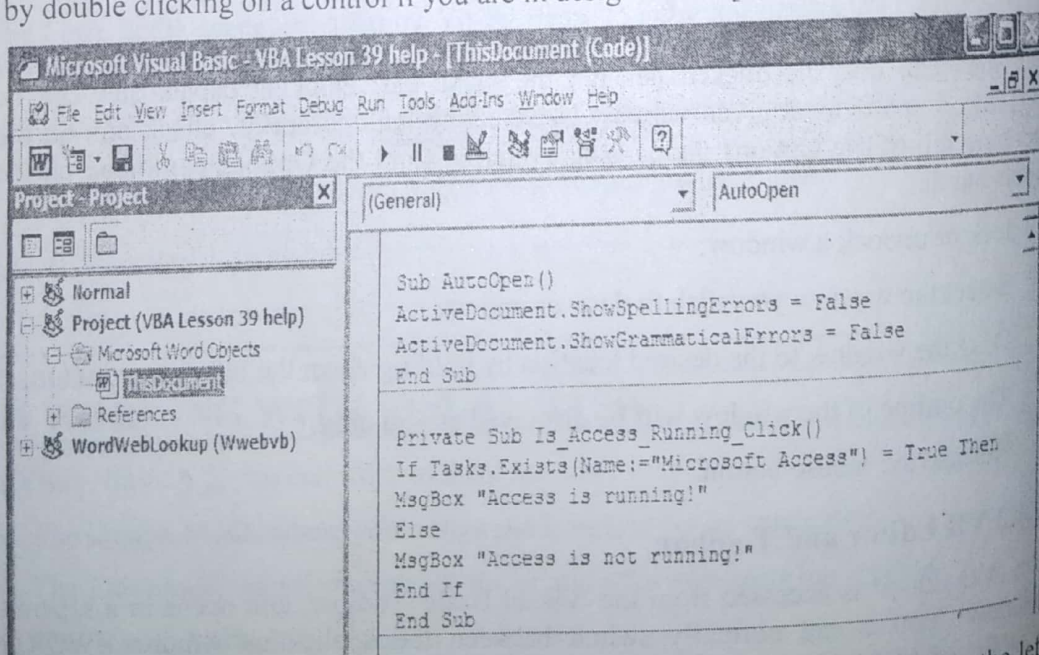
The three controls you can see on the 'Visual Basic' Toolbar shown above are:

- Visual Basic Editor
- Control Toolbox
- Design Mode

You can leave this toolbar to 'float', but it is best to move it into the main toolbar section below the main menu bar.

Visual Basic Editor [Description]

The VB Editor is where you enter your VBA Code. You can also enter the VB Editor by double clicking on a control if you are in design mode. [See below]



In this view of the VB Editor, you can see the 'Project Explorer' window on the left, with the 'Code' window on the right. There are other windows you can open, such as

the 'Property' window and the 'object Browser' window. Use the 'View' menu to select which windows you wish to view.

Control Toolbox

This is where you select the type of control to use. It could be:

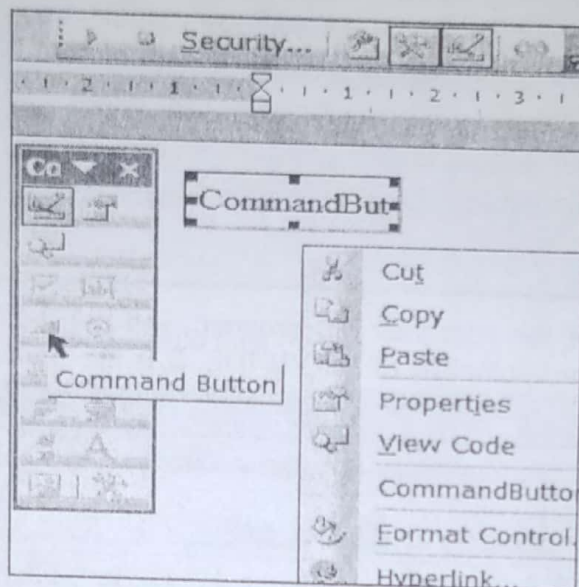
- A simple 3D Button, called a "Command Button"
- A Radio Button
- A Picture Button or
- A more complicated control such as a Combo Box.

Design Mode

Use this to switch between being able to edit a button, and being able to use a button.

For example, in edit mode, if you click on an object such as a 'CommandButton', you will be automatically taken to the objects 'click' procedure in the VBE.

If you right click on an object in edit mode, a menu will appear where you access its various property.



If you turn edit mode off, when you click on the object, you will run its 'click' procedure if one has been created.

1.4.3 Visual Basic Help System

1. On the Tools menu, point to Macro, and then click Visual Basic Editor.
2. On the Help menu, click Microsoft Visual Basic Help.
3. In the Search box, type the method, property, function, statement, or object you want Help on, or type a query.

1.4.4 Using Menus

In this section we will know how to use menu and how we create menu.

The end result of this part 1 will be a form containing a menu with two top-level items, File and Help.

The File menu, shown below, will have the following level-two items below it: New, Open, Save, Save As, Print, and Exit. Note that separator bars appear above the Save, Print, and Exit items.